

# Nevada Department of Education

## EC OUTCOMES

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated 3/2012

#### 1. What are the EC Outcomes?

The Early Childhood Special Education Outcomes are a requirement put forth by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) as part of each State's Performance Plan (SPP). There are 20 indicators for the SPP. This indicator which is #7, requires that each school district assess all preschoolers with IEP's to determine outcomes in the following areas: (1) positive social/emotional skills, (2) acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy), and (3) Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

#### 2. Who will be assessed?

All preschoolers (ages 3 – 5 years old) who have been determined eligible for special education and who are receiving services under an IEP must be assessed. This is true regardless of the child's eligibility category or placement. For example, a preschool child with a Speech only IEP who is seen twice a week will need to be assessed on all 3 outcomes. Likewise, a preschool child with an IEP who is severely disabled will also need to be assessed on all 3 outcomes. Some districts encounter parents who have decided to enroll their child in a private school, where in some cases, the IEP is not implemented and instead a service plan is created and implemented. In these instances, districts are not required to assess those children for entry or exit data.

#### 3. When are children required to be assessed?

Typically, children will be assessed at 2 points. They will be assessed upon entry to preschool special education and at exit from preschool special education (e.g., move to kindergarten, move out of state, exit special education through re-evaluation, turn 6 years of age, etc.). OSEP recommends assessing children as close to entry and exit as possible. Therefore, it is recommended that the entry assessment be conducted on a child within 30 calendar days (4 weeks) of the child's first day of special education services. Additionally, exit assessment should be conducted within 2 months of a child's exit date; for example, at the end of the school year before the child leaves preschool to enter kindergarten, or within 2 months prior to the child turning 6 if he/she is remaining in preschool through the end of the year.

#### 4. Who will conduct the assessment(s)?

The child's teacher and/or assigned school district professional personnel conducts the assessment(s) at both entry and exit.

#### 5. What assessments will Districts use?

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE), along with the assistance of a statewide task force selected five assessments as options that each district may select. A district may select one or more assessments from this list:

- The BRIGANCE Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development-II
- Creative Curriculum's Developmental Continuum
- The Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS)
- Developmental Assessment of Young Children (DAYC)
- Get It, Got It, Go (Preschool DIBELS) - must be used along with another approved assessment

Note: A screening version of an assessment cannot be used for the Early Childhood Outcomes COSF scores. You can use ongoing data collection and progress monitoring if it is used as a part of the assessment tool being used.

6. Can we select other assessments that are not listed above?

No. After careful research and consideration, the statewide stakeholder task force recommended the assessments identified above. In order to make these determinations, the task force, along with NDE staff, researched multiple assessments and consulted with national organizations and technical assistance groups that included the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), and the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO Center) as well as surveyed several states and larger school districts.

7. Can more than one assessment be used with each child and/or in each program?

Yes. For example, a district may decide to use the BRIGANCE and the AEPS - using the Brigance with most of the district's preschool students with IEPs and the AEPS with only those preschoolers who have severe disabilities. Likewise, multiple assessments may be used with one child. For example, a district could use the DAY-C for all 3 outcomes, plus Get It, Got It, Go to provide more assessment data on the 2nd outcome (acquisition and use of knowledge and skills).

8. Are school districts required to assess all three outcome areas as indicated in IDEA?

Yes. Regardless of the area of delay, all school districts must assess all preschool children (ages 3-5) with IEPs in all three outcome areas at both entry and at exit.

9. What is considered "Entry" and "Exit"?

**"Entry"** is determined to be during the first 4 weeks (30 calendar days) after a child is receiving a program or service under an IEP.

**"Exit"** is determined to be any of the following: (a) exit from special education at any time prior to kindergarten entry, (b) leaving the state, (c) exiting preschool prior to kindergarten entry for any other reason, and (d) turning 6 while still in preschool. If a child transfers to a different district within the state, provisions exist within the web-based data collection/reporting program (NV SEARS) to transfer the student's data and continue the data collection process on that child until he/she exits preschool. Exit assessments should be conducted within 2 months of that child's exit date, as indicated in #3. It is possible that a child will leave the preschool program without notice (e.g., moves suddenly). In such instances, districts will be able to indicate the reason for the absence of exit data in the web-based data collection/reporting system known as NV SEARS.

10. Can the child be assessed more frequently than upon entry and exit?

Yes; in fact, it is recommended. The best way to ensure progress is being made over time is to continuously assess a child's developmental levels and adjust instruction in order to meet the child's needs. This continuous, formative assessment will allow teachers to make appropriate lesson plans, adjust curriculum, and provide necessary experiences for students so that they will be provided the best opportunities for school success.

11. How long must a child be receiving a special education program or services before exit data can be collected?

OSEP has determined that a minimum of 6 months of intervention must occur between the entry and exit data points.

12. What if a child exits special education before six months of service?

In such circumstances, the school district will not have to collect exit data. There will be entry data that will have been collected on this child but exit data is not required. By entering the child's exit date, NV SEARS calculates that the child has not received services for 6 months and automatically excludes that child from the report.

13. Does the assessment requirement only apply to 3 year olds?

No. Entry data must be collected on any preschool child, 3-years, 4-years, or 5-years of age, who has been determined eligible for special education and related services and who has an IEP, regardless of whether they enter special education as a 3-year-old, 4-year-old, or 5-year-old and regardless of placement or types of services provided.

14. What if a child enters preschool special education as an older 4-year-old in the spring?

Entry data must be collected within 30 calendar days of the child's first day of service, regardless of when in the school year the child begins to receive services.

15. What if a child's language is not English?

OSEP requires districts to assess all preschool children with IEPs to determine outcomes for Indicator #7. It is recommended that school districts work with their selected assessment publisher or publishers to determine what accommodations can be made that do not jeopardize the standardization or impact the validity of the selected assessment(s).

16. What about children who turn 6 years old while in the preschool program?

Data must be collected on all preschool students who are receiving special education preschool services. In this case, since 6 year olds are not typically considered preschool age, it will be necessary to collect exit assessment data within 2 months of that child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday. **The exit date entered in NV SEARS must be a date that falls BEFORE the child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday to be included in the data collection. Children with an exit date that fell AFTER the child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthdate will not be included.**

17. For what purpose will the assessments be used?

The purpose of this assessment process is to collect district wide and statewide aggregate data to report to OSEP and to the public to answer three federally required questions about children's progress in special education. The information is about the collective results of the State and individual school districts and not about an individual child's

status. Essentially the results will be used to evaluate program effectiveness and identify areas for program improvement.

18. When will data be reported to OSEP?

Every state must submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) regarding progress against the 2005 State Performance Plan (SPP). In February 2007, the state provided only "entry" or baseline data for those preschoolers receiving special education services during the fall of 2006. In February 2008, the state reported in its SPP, both entry and exit data for the children who had exited within the previous year. These data were provided again in February 2009. For the February 2010 submission, the state established performance targets for each outcome area, and in the subsequent years, will report on progress toward the achievement of those targets.

19. Who is responsible for the Early Childhood Outcome requirement?

Local school districts are responsible and accountable for the early childhood outcome requirement for all preschool children with disabilities receiving special education and related services under a district IEP — even if those children are served by other public or private entities. Other public or private entities might include charter schools, magnet schools, private schools, etc.

Some districts encounter parents who have decided to enroll their child in a private school, where in some cases, the IEP is not implemented and instead a service plan is -created and implemented. In these instances, districts are not required to provide assessment data for entry or exit on those children.

20. How will Districts report the data collected?

Districts will report the required data elements to the NDE through a web-based special education accountability and reporting system known as NV SEARS.

The State has developed the database designed to collect the specific items required by OSEP. District representatives will be trained and guided to complete the data entry within timelines necessary to complete the required OSEP reports. The NDE is working with leadership from each district to ensure the smooth collection and reporting of assessment outcomes data. This person is known as the B-7 NV SEARS Administrator.

21. How will the State ensure that the data collected from each District will translate into the OSEP reporting requirements?

As with many other states, the NDE has elected to utilize the Child Outcomes Summary Form (COSF), developed by the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center, in order to ensure that all data collected from each district is submitted in a reportable format. The ECO Center has developed the COSF for summarizing, on a 7-point scale, information related to a child's progress on each of the 3 child outcome areas required by OSEP. This is the data collected in NV SEARS.

22. Are Districts required to use the Child Outcomes Summary Form (COSF)?

Yes. Each district must report their children's COSF scores per outcome indicator in NV SEARS. Additional training and support will be provided by the NDE through collaboration with leadership from each school district.

23. Who completes the COSF?

It is recommended that teachers or service providers to the children complete the COSF. A training module, developed by the NDE and available to all appropriate personnel, provides more detailed information on the use of the COSF and its relationship to the data collection efforts.

24. When do Districts submit the data to the state?

NV SEARS is a real time data system. Student assessment data and COSF scores should be entered as soon as possible after the student assessments have been conducted. Districts must submit data via NV SEARS each school year, which includes the entry data for all “new” children who have entered the district’s ECSE system and the exit data for all children exiting who have received services for at least 6 months. NV SEARS will retain all students in the system until an exit record has been submitted for the student. Based on the submission date of the exit record, the student will then be associated with the appropriate school year for reporting purposes. The NDE will designate an ECO data submission deadline each year and communicate that deadline to the districts.

25. Must districts obtain permission from parents to conduct these assessments?

No. Since all children receiving a program or service under an IEP will be assessed, there is no requirement to obtain permission. However, districts are encouraged to discuss with as well as provide information to families about the purposes of OSEP's child outcomes data collection.

26. Can parents refuse to have their child's assessment data used for purposes of OSEP's outcomes data collection?

OSEP indicates that since these data are needed for federal accountability for the Part C and Part B/619 programs, families cannot refuse to have their child's assessment data included in the aggregate. Again, districts are encouraged to share information with families about the purposes of OSEP's child outcomes.